CANADA DOUBLES SYRIAN REFUGEE TOTAL

metroNEWS

STAR WARS BLASTS BOX OFFICE RECORD

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Toronto metro

Your essential daily news | MONDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2015 | High 7°C/Low 7°C Rain

METRO READERS SAY

Relax liquor laws

metroVIEWS

DECK THE MALLS

Saturday declared the second-busiest shopping day of the year. Plus:

How to wrap those difficult gifts metroNEWS

When retail therapy becomes addiction metroLIFE

Christmas shoppers filled the halls of Eaton Centre on Sunday. LIZ BEDDALL/METRO

The Great Canadian hijab

NATIONAL PRIDE

New look is a response to 'ignorant' comments

Gilbert Ngabo
Metro | Toronto

A local entrepreneur is giving Muslim women across Canada the chance to wear their national pride on their sleeve.

Or more accurately, their head.

Richard Cosh is the founder of the Canadian Project, a Toronto-based group selling Maple Leaf-themed hijabs and scarves.

Cosh said the idea came to him after he read a series of upsetting comments on Facebook about Syrian refugees. Someone had posted a story about refugees arriving in Toronto, but many comments were "too ignorant to ignore," he said.

Some commenters conflated refugees with terrorists and claimed Canada would regret welcoming them, he said. "It made me very angry," he said. "The level of ignorance in those comments was outstanding."

Cosh immediately bought some fabric and, using his mother's sowing machine, he whipped up a prototype hijab dotted with Canadian flags.

"I just wanted to create something that would make every Canadian feel both safe and proud," he said.

When his friends liked the product, he knew he had hit the right nerve. Cosh set up an online store and the orders have been pouring in ever since, he said.

Halima Mohammadu shows off the new design. CONTRIBUTED

The Canadian Project has also launched a Kickstarter campaign to make and sell more scarves and hijabs. They've raised over $1,500 so far, and plan to use the proceeds to help Syrian refugees get settled in Canada.

> **I just wanted to create something that would make every Canadian feel both safe and proud.**
> Richard Cosh

Cosh hopes the clothes will help counter some of the Islamophobia happening in Canada in the wake of the terrorist attacks in Paris last month. After a Toronto Muslim woman wearing a hijab was attacked, Cosh said one of his Muslim friends told him he had warned his mother — who wears a head scarf — to be careful.

"It just felt weird coming from my friend who is as Canadian as myself," he said. "That's definitely not the kind of country I want to live in."

Get to know Lolo

Lolo sings in the shower

Lolo presses snooze

Lolo makes navy and black look good

Lolo plays board games

Lolo pays extra for guac

Lolo picks the window seat

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metro NEWS

Your essential daily news

Take a tour through some of Canada's historic heritage homes. **Canada**

Yorkdale Shopping Centre tweeted a photo of **Justin Bieber posing with the mall's Fashion Santa.** THE CANADIAN PRESS/TWITTER/YORKDALE STYLE

YORKDALE

Bieber encounters T.O.'s stylish Santa

Some star power has graced a Toronto shopping mall.

Yorkdale Shopping Centre tweeted a photo of Justin Bieber posing for a selfie with the mall's "Fashion Santa," a model who goes by Paul Mason from January to November.

Yorkdale wrote on Twitter that the Canadian pop star was shopping at the mall when he posed with Mason.

The images were posted Saturday but it was not clear when they were taken.

Before capturing the Bieber's attention, Mason made international headlines for starring in the mall's Christmas ad campaign.

He's also been posing for selfies with mall-goers like Bieber in support of SickKids Foundation, which raises funds on behalf of Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

AT THE ZOO

White lion cubs meet public

Four white lion cubs, born at the Toronto Zoo in September, met their fans for the first time at the weekend.

The Toronto Zoo announced Saturday that the four males will be around for the public to see in an outdoor viewing area just behind the African Savanna area from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. every day. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Trump name must go, say Canadians

ANGUS REID

56 per cent want mogul's name taken off hotel buildings

Gilbert Ngabo
Metro | Toronto

If Donald Trump depended on Canadian voters for his presidential run, he'd be in for a rough ride.

A new Angus Reid poll suggests the majority of Canadians would like the controversial real estate mogul's name scrubbed from hotel towers in Toronto and Vancouver.

Donald Trump THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Toronto and Vancouver residents overwhelmingly support the idea of ditching Trump's name from the buildings — 62 per cent of those polled — while nationally the approval stands at 56 per cent.

The GOP front-runner started drawing Canadian and global condemnation after his recent comments calling for a total ban on Muslims entering the United States.

The poll showed 67 per cent of Canadians disagree with that stance, while 63 per cent of respondents see Trump's statements as "bad for society" and "encouraging fear and hatred of Muslims."

The majority of Canadians — 74 per cent — also think Trump's campaign is receiving too much attention, according to the poll.

Toronto city councillor Josh Matlow was among the first to call for the dumping of Trump's name on the downtown building, calling the candidate "fascist." A local street artist has also called him "disgusting" and "an idiot."

But Talon International, part owner of the Toronto Trump tower, said there's a legal agreement preventing a name change. However, Donald Trump's own opinions do not reflect those of other investors, a Talon spokesperson told Metro.

WITH FILES FROM JESSICA SMITH CROSS

According to a new poll, 62 per cent of Torontonians and Vancouverites think **Donald Trump's name should be removed from the Trump Hotel on Bay Street.** TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE FILE

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Shouldering the cost

Facing an operating budget with a $57-million shortfall and no way to pay for some $22 billion in infrastructure projects, politicians in Toronto seem to have accepted the city has a revenue problem. Filling holes in the city's coffers will undoubtedly require a property-tax increase. Various councillors, meanwhile, are floating ideas on how to bring in more revenue over and above that. Today, we look at Ward 5 Coun. Justin Di Ciano's pitch to raise development charges in the city.

MINDING TORONTO'S $ BUDGET GAP

Hiking fees on development

Luke Simcoe
Metro | Toronto

Coun. Justin Di Ciano believes righting Toronto's fiscal ship begins with getting property developers to "pay their fair share."

The rookie councillor in Ward 5 wants to raise the development charges applied to all new residential units in the city. The rates are calculated using a provincial formula, and work out to about $25,000 per unit, Di Ciano said.

According to Di Ciano, that's about half the charges being paid by developers building in other parts of the GTA.

"The provincial act that governs development charges is flawed," he said. "It's designed for greenfield development in the suburbs. In Toronto, we don't develop 500 acres at a time; we develop one or two acres at a time. It's infill development."

Di Ciano wants the province to grant Toronto the power to charge developers more. Increased density means more demand on the city's infrastructure and he believes "billionaire" developers should shoulder more of the cost.

The city is expecting 160,000 new residential units to come online in the next decade, Di Ciano said, noting that bringing development charges in the city in line with other municipalities would bring in about $3 billion in revenue.

Di Ciano disputed the notion that increasing development fees would lead to a spike in real estate costs in Toronto.

"That's false and a lie," he said. "The only thing that determines the price of a home is the market. It's what people are willing to pay."

Before we go to the taxpayers we need to challenge special interests and get them to pay their fair share. Coun. Justin Di Ciano
Di Ciano

First-term councillor Justin Di Ciano (Ward 5) says **the city could raise an additional $3 billion over the next decade by increasing the fees it charges residential developers.** TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Have a revenue tool idea of your own? Email luke.simcoe@metronews.ca

IN BRIEF

Driver dies in police chase
A 30-year-old man is dead after fleeing police and then crashing into a ditch in Whitchurch-Stouffville early Sunday. Ontario's Special Investigations Unit says a York Regional Police officer tried to stop a vehicle near the intersection of Highway 48 and Vandorf Sideroad at about 2:20 a.m. SIU said the driver refused to stop, and, following a pursuit, the driver's car crashed. He was pronounced dead at the scene. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Five injured in TTC crash
Five people were taken to hospital following a collision Sunday morning between a TTC bus and an SUV in Scarborough. Paramedics said two teenagers in the SUV were rushed to hospital with serious injuries. Three others suffered non-life-threatening injuries. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Pair dies in fall off building
Two died Sunday after falling from a building near Bathurst Street and St. Clair Avenue W., reports said.

Police and paramedics said the man and woman, both adults, fell just before 6 p.m. The deaths happened at 111 Raglan Ave.

Police were investigating, but reports from several news organizations said the deaths were not being considered suspicious. METRO

Woman, 18, shot at party
Toronto police say an 18-year-old woman was accidentally shot at a party. Investigators say the wound was inflicted Thursday night by a man who was trying to show off his gun. The man was charged with aggravated assault and several gun-related offences. The wound to the woman's arm is not considered life-threatening. THE CANADIAN PRESS

App Store BEST OF 2015

UNWRAP MORE NEWS

The free news app from Toronto Star is publishing on Christmas Day. Discover why it's listed as one of the **Best of 2015: Apps**.

TORONTO STAR TOUCH

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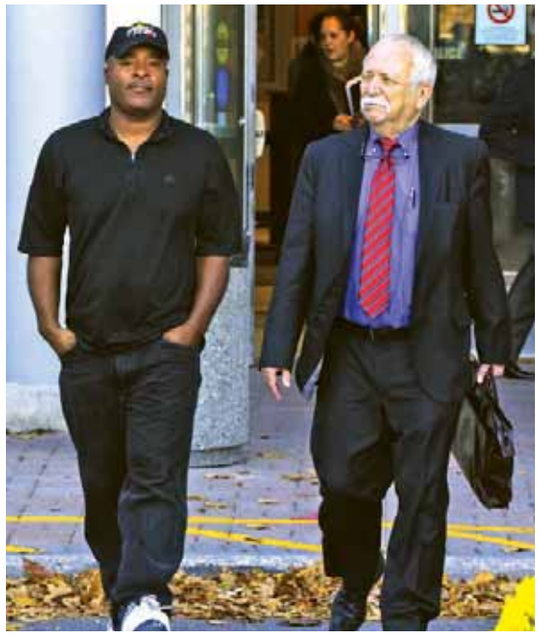
Police tipped off tow drivers

PEEL

Three officers disciplined for colluding in business deals



Wayne Isaacs and his lawyer, Harry Doan TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Carlton Watson MISSISSAUGA NEWS

Christy Clough CONTRIBUTED

Three Peel Region officers have been busted in recent years for colluding with the same tow-truck driver and accused fraudster, an ongoing Torstar News Service investigation into police misconduct has found.

One veteran officer wrote fraudulent accident reports for the tow operator as part of a scam that bilked insurers of nearly $1 million. The other two officers tipped the tow-truck driver off to the location of crashes using confidential police information.

Wayne Isaacs, a Brampton-based tow-truck driver, is at the centre of the web of police misconduct, and faces his own criminal fraud charges. The 49-year-old Isaacs said he is just being used by police as a way to get rid of problem officers.

"I'm being railroaded," he said while sitting outside a Brampton courtroom.

In the past five years, roughly 350 officers from police services in the Greater Toronto Area — Toronto, Peel, York, Halton and Durham — and the Ontario Provincial Police have been disciplined for what their own services call "serious" misconduct.

Isaacs said it is common practice on the roads for police to tip off tow trucks about crashes.

"Have I ever been (tipped off about a crash) by an officer? I'll say yes — I have nothing to lie about," he said.

Veteran Peel police Const. Carlton Watson has known Wayne Isaacs for years, crossing paths with him as early as the 1990s, as they both worked the roads of Peel Region.

Over several months in 2010, Const. Watson provided reports to Isaacs for three crashes that never happened, according to the court decision from Watson's criminal trial.

The crashes were part of a larger scheme in which people staged or faked collisions in order to file fraudulent insurance claims, including for vehicle damage and physiotherapy.

In February, Watson was convicted of more than 40 criminal charges, including fraud and breach of trust. Isaacs still faces his own fraud charges.

"The witnesses called against him were all admitted fraudsters, some of them high up on the chain of fraudsters," Watson's lawyer, Susan von Achten, told Torstar.

She said Watson is appealing his conviction.

By summer 2010, Isaacs was focusing on relationships he had with other officers, according to internal Peel police disciplinary decisions.

Const. Matthew Pekeski has known the tow-truck driver for years. He introduced Isaacs to Christy Clough, a rookie officer.

After arresting Isaacs and going through his phone, internal investigators found both Pekeski and Clough separately fed the tow-truck driver information about crashes from their in-car police computers.

"Working?" Const. Pekeski texted Isaacs one late-October evening. "Yes," the tow operator responded.

"Petro gas station 401/queen, 2 car in lot."

The text was sent seven minutes before a dispatcher had even broadcast the crash to fellow officers.

"Const. Pekeski used his position as a police officer to access confidential information relating to motor vehicle collisions," Supt. Paul Thorne said in his decision to discipline Pekeski. "He subsequently provided this information to Wayne Isaacs, a local tow-truck driver, for his advantage."

Pekeski's lawyer challenged the severity of the misconduct, saying the crashes were public knowledge and Pekeski was merely relaying the information from a confidential system.

Isaacs told Torstar he never received tips about crashes from Pekeski or Clough.

Pekeski pleaded guilty at a disciplinary hearing and was docked nine days' pay. Still an officer with Peel, he did not respond to repeated requests from Torstar for an interview.

The rookie officer, Clough, received a much harsher penalty: At a disciplinary hearing, Clough pleaded guilty to tipping off Isaacs to multiple crashes between December 2010 and March 2011. She was also found guilty of giving the impression she could help get a traffic ticket dropped for one of Isaacs' associates.

Her lawyer told the hearing that the young officer did nothing to actually have the ticket withdrawn, and there is no evidence she received any money from Isaacs.

However, Clough told Torstar she never tipped Isaacs off to any crashes. She alleges the charges were part of an onslaught of trumped-up allegations intended to ruin her career.

"What Peel is putting out there isn't true. It's an old boys' club. It's selective prosecution," she said in an interview. "They pick and choose who they are going to put targets on."

An internal disciplinary hearing also found Clough guilty of deliberately trying to mislead investigators looking into the tow-truck case.

She said she pleaded guilty to tipping off Isaacs because her lawyer advised it was the best way to put this all behind her and get back to the job she loved.

She was ordered to resign in seven days or be dismissed.

Clough appealed the decision, her lawyer arguing that the gulf between the punishment Pekeski received for "exactly the same misconduct … cannot be explained, even when the differences between the two cases are taken into account."

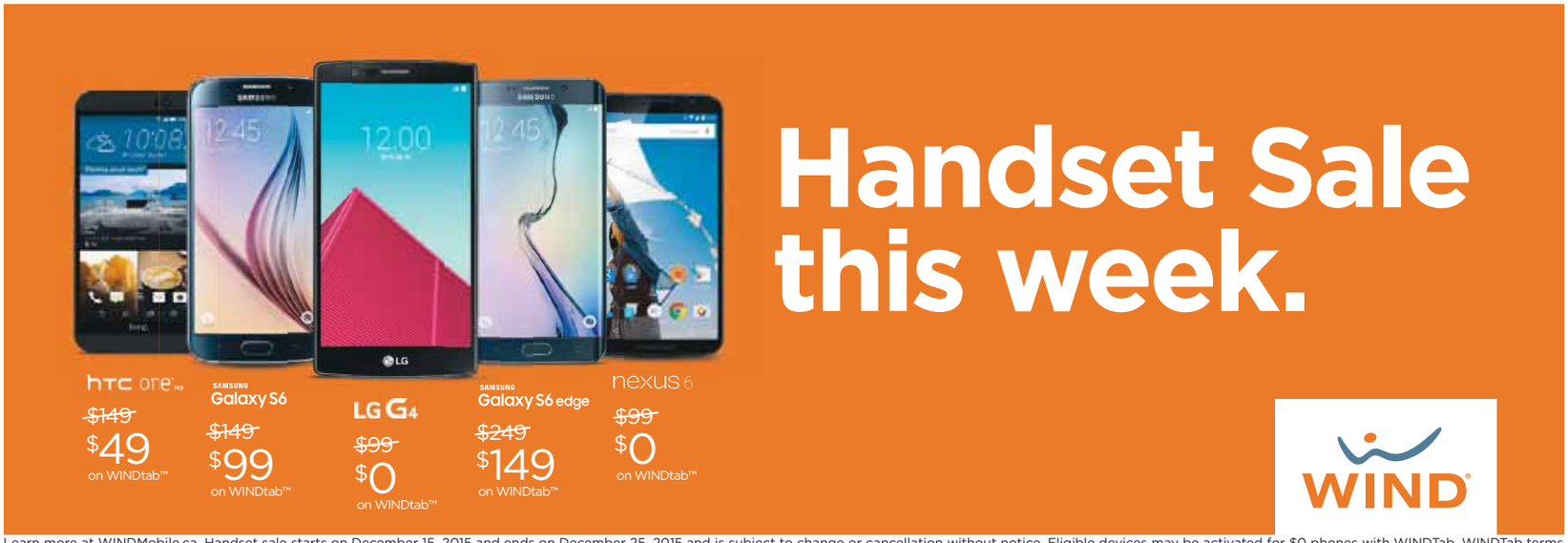
Her appeal was rejected and, in 2014, she was forced to resign.

Meanwhile, Watson, a convicted fraudster, remains a member of the force — for now.

> **It's concerning every time an officer does something illegal.**
> Peel Police Chief Jennifer Evans

From when he was arrested in April 2011, until he was sentenced on Sept. 14 to five years in prison, Watson continued to get paid, collecting hundreds of thousands of dollars. It was only after he was sentenced that Peel police, under Ontario's Police Services Act, could suspend the officer without pay.

The force is going after his badge. The next date in his disciplinary matter is scheduled for January. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE



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A wrap job that won't rip you off

It's no secret that Corinna vanGerwen is gifted. As one of the only experts of her kind in the country, the professional present-wrapper's skills are regularly put to use by advertisers, magazines, businesses and gift-giving individuals alike. With gift-giving going into high gear this week, Metro challenged vanGerwen to embellish five awkwardly shaped items and provide readers with some decorative wisdom along the way.

STORY AND PHOTOS: LIZ BEDDALL METRO

Gift wrappers — they're just like us: Five years into her full-time gift-wrapping career, vanGerwen admits that like many others, her own holiday wrapping frequently comes together at 2 a.m. on Christmas Eve.

A wrap party, suggests vanGerwen, is a perfect way to prep an array of uniquely styled packages while feting with friends.

It's as easy as grabbing a group of pals, asking everyone to bring along a different roll of paper, and wrapping away.

"Instead of a cookie exchange, you can all get together while also crossing something off your list," she says.

Full-time wrapper Corinna vanGerwen demonstrates some techniques you can use to master the art of giftwrapping.

A coffee mug, colander, heart-shaped box, umbrella and soccer ball didn't intimidate vanGerwen, who says she was once tasked with wrapping a wheelbarrow.

With a little help from vanGerwen, our strangely shaped bounty of booty is ready for delivery,

Nervous your attempt at giftwrapping might end up on a Top 10 wrapping fails list? VanGerwen has some tips for those hard-to-wrap items:

Umbrella: For long or jagged-edged items, such as hockey sticks and shovels, vanGerwen suggests rolling the item loosely in sturdy wrapping paper, taping lightly and securing the ends without pushing down on the gift, to envelop the object rather than taking its precise shape.

Soccer ball: "One thing I want to stress is don't be shy to put gifts in bags or boxes," says vanGerwen. "There are many ways to embellish a generic bag. Tie a bow to the corner of the handle and add an embellishment. Embellishments don't have to be expensive or fancy."

Heart-shaped box: "When it comes to tissue, the trick is to treat it as more like a cloud — try not to squish it," vanGerwen says. She encourages wrappers to combine tissues and colours, and to lay the tissue sheets down on different angles for the best result when enveloping an object.

Mug: "When tying a ribbon, instead of going over and through like you would a shoelace, you can circle behind and through — it keeps the bow straighter," vanGerwen says.

A WRAP, IT IS

Before:

The festive force is strong
"Excellent wrapping job this is," Metro's office Yoda says.

After:

VanGerwen uses her 'enveloping' technique to disguise an umbrella.

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‘It’s so heartbreaking and painful’

AFRICA

Burundians gather to raise awareness of country’s war

Gilbert Ngabo
Metro | Toronto

They came in droves, sat in silence, lit candles, knelt and prayed. They met in a Toronto church but their thoughts were thousands of miles away.

Hundreds of local Burundians met at the Sacré Couer Catholic church near Sherbourne and Carlton streets Saturday evening. Burundi is on the brink of civil war, but vigil-goers say the conflict has been overshadowed by the crisis in Syria.

“Hope? I don’t have any hope,” said Charles Nicayenzi, a local schoolteacher and one of the organizers of the vigil.

“It’s so heartbreaking and painful to hear of the dead and disappeared people, and no one is paying attention,” he said. “Psychologically we are broken.”

The east African nation — home to nearly 12 million people — descended into violence earlier this year following President Pierre Nkurunziza’s controversial re-election. Nkurunziza’s attempt to maintain power for a third term is considered unconstitutional by many Burundians.

The political tension has erupted into street protests, and hundreds have lost their lives since the summer, sending thousands of refugees fleeing to neighbouring countries.

Over the weekend the African Union voted to send about 5,000 peacekeepers to Burundi, but the government rejected the idea, saying Burundi has enough forces to maintain peace.

Toronto’s Burundian community gathered Sunday to commemorate those who have lost their lives in a civil war in the country. GILBERT NGABO/METRO

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PATH STABBING

Donations pour in for victim’s family

An online fundraiser for the funeral expenses of Rosemarie Junor hit its $25,000 target in a day, and donations keep coming.

Miguel Junor, Rosemarie’s older brother, mourned the loss in the petition. Rosemarie Junor died after being stabbed at a Shoppers Drug Mart outlet located in the PATH on Dec. 11.

“My family is heartbroken at the thought of continuing in this life without our beautiful Rosemarie,” he wrote. “We are currently making funeral arrangements (and) any donation would (be) greatly appreciated to contribute towards her funeral.” The donations would be needed by the family on Monday.

A total of 389 donors pitched in more than $29,000 by early Sunday — including a $1,000 donation by Shoppers Drug Mart. The largest donation was $1,800, given by a Nalini Persaud. Condolences filled the comment section below.

Rohinie Bisesar, 40, was originally charged with attempted murder. Those charges were updated after Junor succumbed to her injuries. She appeared in court Friday. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Rosemarie Junor
THE CANADIAN PRESS

COLLISION

Cyclist in serious condition

A cyclist was taken to a Toronto trauma centre following a collision Sunday.

Emergency services crews were called to Dufferin St. near Davenport Road around 6:40 a.m.

A Toronto Paramedic Services spokesperson said the cyclist, a man in his mid-20s, was in serious condition.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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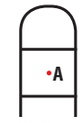

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Humans of Toronto by K. Omar

"I was 21, walking on Glendon College campus when I saw her. I asked about where she was from and she returned with a simple, 'Why?' I asked her again and she said the Middle East. I told her I knew, but I wanted to know where in the Middle East. She replied 'Iraq.' And I said, 'Me, too.' It was cool, we ended up getting married. It changed my life.

Humans of Toronto is K. Omar's social photography project aimed at photographing and talking to people in the city. Selections from her work feature weekly in Metro. See more at Humans_of_Toronto on Instagram.

Saved from chipper

EDUCATION

Grade 9 class turns damaged trees into cool wood projects

Students at Highland Junior High School used to complain about having nowhere to sit outside.

Now, there's a log "couch," plus benches, stump seats and game tables — furniture they made themselves from wood salvaged from schoolyard trees chopped down because of an emerald ash borer infestation.

"We were blown away" by what the teens and their teacher were able to do, said Justin Nadeau, green projects team leader for the Toronto District School Board, who said there was a push to keep the felled ash trees from the chipper.

Nadeau noted that the ash borer, while eventually fatal to trees, burrows just under the bark, leaving the salvaged wood structurally strong.

Local Trustee Alexander Brown said the students were "taking a facilities issue — it's a tragedy losing these trees — and turning it into a rich learning opportunity."

Photos of the finished projects left Brown so impressed, he's now promoting the project to other schools in his Willowdale ward — five of which have already placed their own orders with Highland for items such as game boards and benches, mostly for use in play areas for full-day kindergarten students.

The idea began two years ago, when teacher Gary Adler returned from lunch and saw board arborists in the back field, cutting down infected trees there, as well as some hanging over into properties adjacent to the school.

"They had the wood chipper there, and I said, 'Can we have the wood instead?' ... I've been here five years, and the kids were always saying they had nowhere to sit. So they helped with the idea" to create an outdoor space using the wood.

Arya Alizadeh helped with sanding and planing the wood used in Highland's outdoor benches and is now working on wooden platters to give to retiring teachers as thank-you gifts.

"We're taking it and reusing it. It feels pretty good," said the Grade 9 student.

The students are learning to create wood pieces to certain specifications, and having real-life clients makes the work meaningful, he added.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Arya Alizadeh starts work on a platter in Gary Adler's woodworking class. COLE BURSTON/TORONTO STAR

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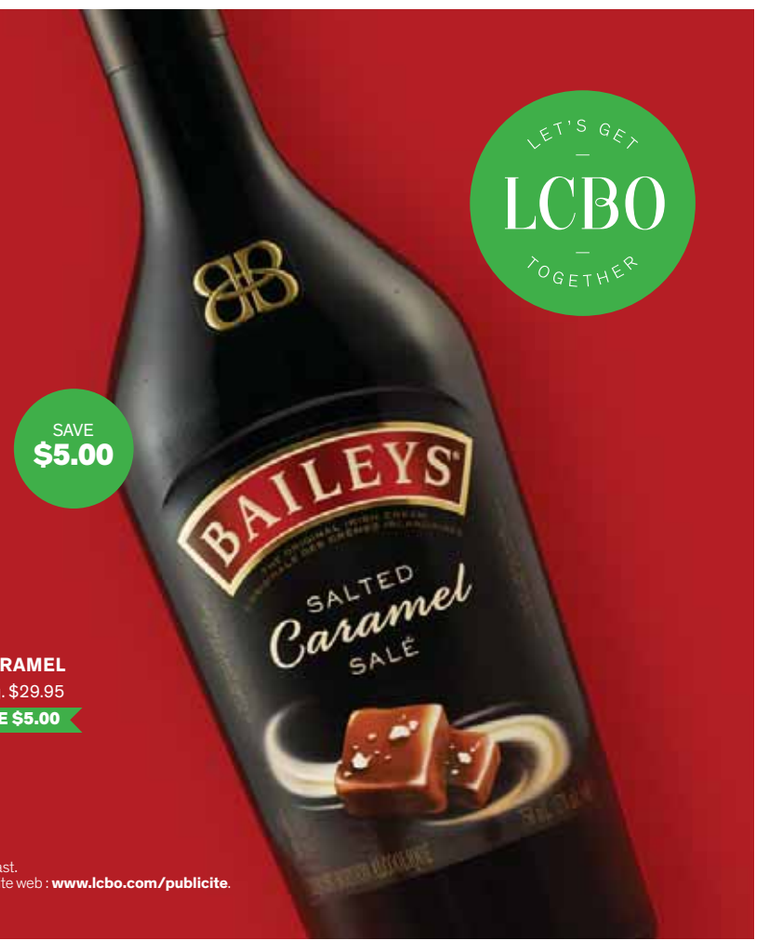

MISS WORLD 2015

Barring of Canadian causes controversy

Anastasia Lin, Canada's contestant. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Spain's Mireia Lalaguna Royo has won the Miss World 2015 competition in the southern Chinese island resort of Sanya, an event dogged by controversy over China's refusal to allow Canada's entrant to attend.

The victory marked the first-ever win for a Spanish contestant.

Lalaguna, a 23-year-old model from Barcelona with a degree in pharmacology who plans to pursue a master's degree in nutrition, placed first in the competition's top model contest and appeared to impress the judges with her public speaking.

Not present was Miss Canada, Chinese-born Anastasia Lin, who had been prevented from boarding her connecting flight to Sanya from Hong Kong last month after China refused her a visa.

Lin is an outspoken critic of Chinese religious policy and a follower of the Falun Gong meditation practice, which was outlawed by China in 1999.

She said that after she won the Canadian title, Chinese security agents visited her father, who still lives in China, in an apparent attempt to intimidate her into silence.

Neither Beijing nor the London-based Miss World Organization has commented on the controversy.

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Rob Petkau, the owner of Genesis Custom Sabers. CONTRIBUTED

'I love being the designer'

STAR WARS

Meet Canada's professional lightsaber developer

Alex Boyd
Metro | Edmonton

According to Star Wars lore, Jedi knights build lightsabers as part of their training. For Rob Petkau, it's more of a day job.

Petkau is the owner of Genesis Custom Sabers. Originally based in Edmonton, he just relocated to Cochrane, Alberta — but he's still Canada's only professional lightsaber designer.

"I don't want to be Ford, I want to be Ferrari," Petkau says. "There are people that are trying to mass-produce lightsabers so that you can get them cheap, but I want to make the most amazing stuff I can."

That means things like hand-etched grips, copper and quartz accents, a LED light "blade" in any colour and sound effects.

Built sturdy enough to mock duel with, his designs start at $500, but the one-of-a-kind sabers built by hand in his garage workshop run as high as $3,000.

These aren't movie knock-offs. "I love being the designer," he says. "To build a prop that's been in a movie is fun, but it's already been designed, someone has already thought it up."

"What I do is think, 'If I was a Jedi or a Sith, how would I want my lightsaber to look?'"

> **"I just want to hold a real lightsaber, and this is the closest I can get.**
> Rob Petkau

Almost 20 years ago, Petkau was a youth pastor when "the idea of building a lightsaber got lodged in my head," so he headed to the hardware store and started sifting through parts.

The buzz from The Force Awakens helps, he says, but there's been an upswing in the last decade in things like cosplay and choreographed duelling and online sales mean he can sell to would-be Jedi internationally.

MANITOBA

Trans judge appointed

Manitoba has appointed its first transgender judge, and possibly the first in Canada.

Kael McKenzie was appointed to the provincial court last week.

McKenzie has been a Crown attorney in Manitoba for five years, and also practised family, commercial and civil law before that. He received his law degree from the University of Manitoba in 2006.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Inside official residences

HERITAGE

The stories behind some of Canada's historic homes

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's first post-election decision was to leave 24 Sussex Drive vacant so that the aging official residence in Ottawa can undergo critical renovations.

It's a historic home — all the more so because Trudeau grew up there and will likely move back in before the end of his four-year term. But it is just one of the nation's official residences, each of which holds pieces of Canada's heritage.

Government House in St. John's. CONTRIBUTED

1 Government House
St. John's
One of the oldest official residences in Canada, the two-storey red sandstone building was built for Sir Thomas Cochrane, as a condition of his appointment as Governor of Newfoundland. Twenty-eight masons and 25 carpenters brought in from Scotland built the structure between 1827 and 1831. Government House has served as the home of the province's lieutenant governor since the province became a part of Canada in 1949. It cost $746,800 to run in 2013-14.
SOURCE: 2014 NEWFOUNDLAND BUDGET

Victoria's Government House CONTRIBUTED

2 Government House
Victoria, B.C.
The current building opened in 1959 after fires destroyed the two previous residences of the province's lieutenant governors in 1899 and 1957. The estate has served as the home of the Queen's representative since B.C. joined confederation in 1871. On the grounds is a bronze statue of Sir James Douglas, considered the founder of B.C., and Hosaqami, a 24-foot totem pole originally commissioned to celebrate the relationship between the Canadian and British navies. Total annual cost last year was $1.328 million.
SOURCE: 2014 ANNUAL STATEMENT OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Gov.-Gen. David Johnston at La Citadelle. CONTRIBUTED

3 La Citadelle
Quebec City
Few of Canada's official residences better embody the occupant's official symbolic function than La Citadelle, the star-shaped military fortress built between 1820 and 1832. The Governor General of Canada, whose primary residence is Rideau Hall in Ottawa, has occupied a residence and a wing of offices on the grounds of the base since 1872 when Lord Dufferin occupied the post. Costs for 2014 to 2015 totalled $746,122.
SOURCE: PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES CANADA

Stornoway COLOURPIX.COM/ TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

4 Stornoway
Ottawa
The official residence of the Leader of the Official Opposition, Stornoway was built in 1913. During the Second World War when it served as the home of the Dutch heir to the throne, Princess Juliana and her family, who went into exile after the Nazi invasion of 1940. After the war, in 1946, Conservative Senator Grattan O'Leary began fundraising for a trust that would buy and maintain a residence for the federal opposition leader. The owners made Stornoway available for $55,000. It was taken over by the federal government in 1970 and has annual costs of $54,715.
SOURCE: NATIONAL CAPITAL COMMISSION TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

IN BRIEF

Defence minister visits Iraq, reports say
Canada's defence minister is visiting Iraq, just days after Canadian military forces helped push back a major Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) offensive on Thursday.

Kurdish media are reporting that Harjit Sajjan spent Sunday in the town of Irbil in a visit not announced by the Canadian government in advance Images show Sajjan meeting with Kurdish officials in Irbil. THE CANADIAN PRESS

No UN Security Council seat for Canada just yet
Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has all but ruled out a return for Canada to the powerful United Nations Security Council any time before 2019.

That's because other western European countries in the UN group to which Canada belongs have declared their intentions to run, effectively filling up the ballot up to 2020 and beyond.

Canada lost loss a seat on the council in 2010 to Portugal. THE CANADIAN PRESS

INFRASTRUCTURE

Canadian cities to tame their oft-maligned expressways

After the colossal Georgia Viaduct was built in Vancouver in 1972, a grassroots uproar stopped the construction of what would have been a multilane expressway.

The City of Vancouver voted last month to tear down the viaduct while discussion continues over construction of a new street network below it.

Other Canadian cities are also contending with their own white elephants of infrastructure — vestiges of the freeway-building craze of the 1960s and 1970s that inspired public uprisings.

Toronto's Gardiner Expressway is another example of a curtailed Canadian freeway project. However, its marginal usefulness in managing some traffic has turned it into what Christopher Leo, professor emeritus of urban planning at the University of Winnipeg, described as "a really big and knotty political problem nobody seems to know the answer to."

6.5
Number of hectares the Cogswell Interchange occupies on prime ocean-side real estate in Halifax. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

Vancouver's former chief planner Brent Toderian used the term "almost scandalous" to describe the lengthy debate over the Gardiner's future, adding the public money spent on the issue amounts to failure.

"It's a political decision," he said. "It's essentially incontrovertible city-making evidence running up against politics."

Toderian said as cities re-imagine their downtown spaces, they face "possibly the most powerful city-making moments in the Canadian urban landscape."

"These opportunities are too important to squander with even an average result," he said. "It starts with tearing them down." THE CANADIAN PRESS

The Gardiner Expressway TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE FILE

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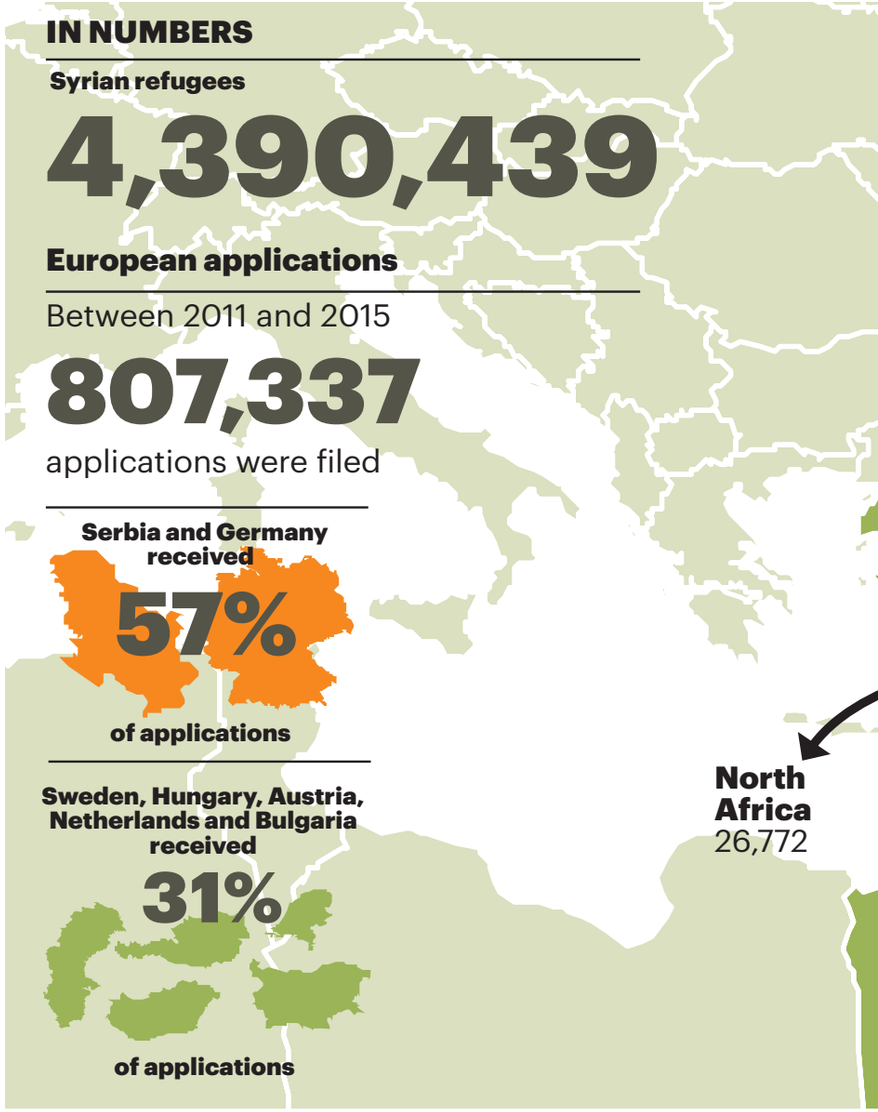
The rising flow of Syrian refugees



IMMIGRATION

Canada taking in twice the number of refugees

Canada's minister of immigration and citizenship says the country's resettlement program for Syrian refugees could double its intake by the end of next year to 50,000.

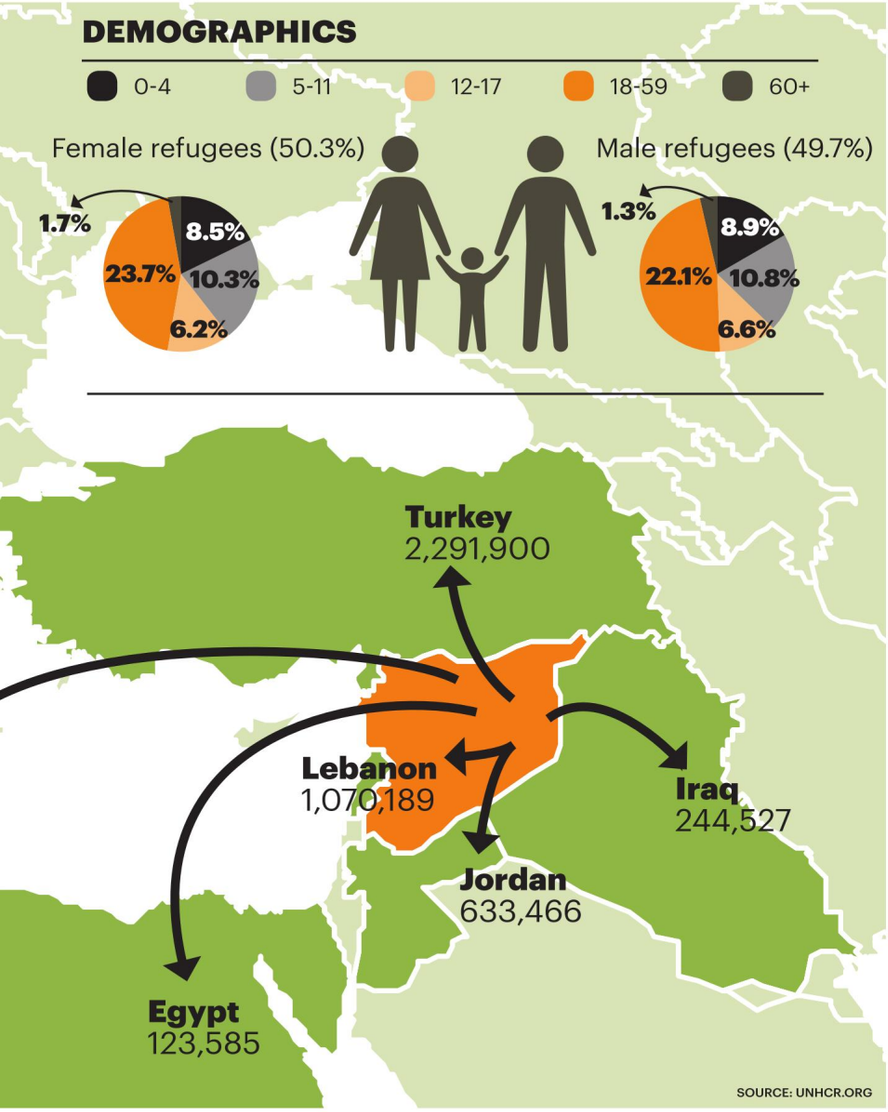
John McCallum was in the Jordanian capital of Amman on Sunday, meeting with Syrian families preparing to board flights to Canada. He told one family: "Everyone in Canada is waiting to meet you."

Canada's new Liberal government is pushing forward with its pledge to resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees by the end of February. McCallum says Canada hopes to settle 35,000 to 50,000 Syrian refugees by the end of 2016, with the UN refugee agency, the Jordanian government and the International Organization for Migration assisting with the vetting process.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

With hundreds of thousands killed, millions internally displaced and millions more fleeing war-torn Syria, the mounting refugee crisis has been called the largest in recent history. But who is most likely to flee their home country? And where are they going instead? The numbers tell a harrowing tale.

METRO



Canadian Minister of Immigration John McCallum speaks with a Syrian family inside their tent, during his visit to a refugee camp in the southern town of Ghaziyeh on Friday. BILAL HUSSEIN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

Spain's ruling party wins

Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy has claimed victory in Spain's general election but acknowledged the win falls short of giving his Popular Party a workable majority in Parliament.

With 99.9 per cent of the vote counted, the Popular Party won just 123 seats in the 350-member lower house — far below the 186-seat majority it won four years ago after beating the Socialists in a landslide.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bomb scare grounds jet

A fake explosive rigged with cardboard, sheets of paper and a household timer forced an Air France flight into an emergency landing in Kenya on Sunday, sending hundreds of passengers down emergency slides in what the airline's CEO said was the fourth bomb hoax against the airline in recent weeks.

The homemade apparatus was discovered around midnight hidden in a lavatory cabinet behind a mirror.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Growth at top of list

FINANCE SUMMIT

Ministers to discuss Liberal promises at Ottawa talks

Provincial and territorial finance ministers, meeting in Ottawa with federal counterpart Bill Morneau, hope to come away with a better understanding of the government's election promises, which touch on a broad range of issues likely to impact the provinces.

The agenda includes Liberal promises of public-pension reform, infrastructure spending and a revamped child-benefit plan. But with the country's economy struggling to rebound from the negative effects of low commodity prices, there's an overarching theme Morneau says he would like to focus on.

"The main subject I'd like to talk about is growth," he said recently when asked about the meeting.

"We will be spending time talking about infrastructure and how we can best make infrastructure investments together with the provinces. And as I said, we're going to talk about Canada Pension Plan enhancement and how we might be able to work together in that regard."

The Liberals also pledged to provide billions of dollars worth of funding for the provinces, territories and municipalities for infrastructure projects such as public transit. The party argues that such investments are crucial to firing up Canada's weakened economy and to creating jobs.

While it may not appear on the official agenda, Morneau is expected to field questions from the other ministers about health care and the need to figure out how to grapple with its mounting costs.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

HOLIDAY TRADITION LOBSTER EXPORTS TO EUROPE PLUNGE Live lobsters are packed at the Maine Lobster Outlet in York for shipment to Europe, where they are a Christmas tradition in several countries. But a strong U.S. dollar and a less-than-festive economy overseas mean fewer lobsters are making it onto European tables. Lobster's status as a luxury item, coupled with rising prices because of competition from Chinese importers and a weak euro, is motivating some consumers to stay away — even if they can afford it. Some in the American lobster industry suspect European business will be off more than 25 per cent this year.

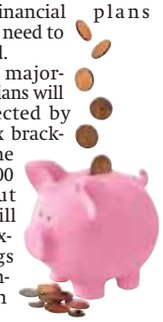
ROBERT F. BUKATY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PERSONAL FINANCE

Income tax rules changing

The tax rules are changing in 2016, and even if Canadians don't make enough to be hit by the new top federal income tax rate, their financial plans are going to need to be reviewed.

The vast majority of Canadians will not be affected by the new tax bracket for income over $200,000 a year, but everyone will see their tax-free savings account contribution limit be reduced back to $5,500 for 2016.



Tax-free savings is being scaled back. ISTOCK.COM

Peter Bowen, vice-president of tax and retirement research and solutions at Fidelity Investments, says for many people this might be the most important tax-planning season they've ever had.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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metro VIEWS

Your essential daily news

Monday, December 21, 2015

That's barking
A new biophysics study explains why dogs can't drink without making a mess (it has to do with the surface area of their tongues).

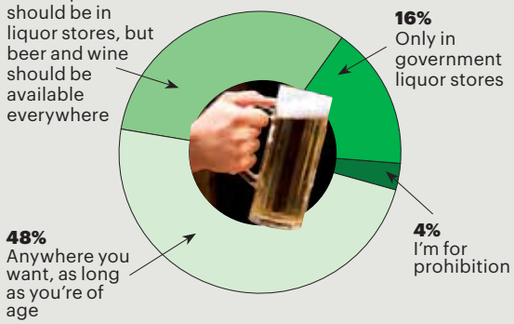
Metro MONDAY POLL

Liberalizing liquor

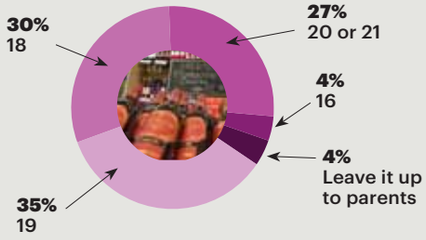
Visit metronews.ca **every Friday to have your say.**

In the past week, Ontario took a few cautious steps towards liberalizing alcohol sales in the province; allowing beer to be sold in select grocery stores. But worries about the effect of alcohol on public morals have persisted for a century or more, and the Ontario Public Service Employees' Union has expressed concerns that easily available beer and wine will increase violence against women. We asked our readers from all provinces if they want to be able to buy alcohol anywhere, or if they're for temperance or even T-total prohibition.

1 Where should you be allowed to buy alcohol?


32%
Hard liquor should be in liquor stores, but beer and wine should be available everywhere
16%
Only in government liquor stores
48%
Anywhere you want, as long as you're of age
4%
I'm for prohibition

2 What should the drinking age be?



3 What are your concerns about alcohol being sold in commercial stores?

32% It will be easier for minors to get alcohol
15% It will reduce tax revenue
15% It will be hard for people who are trying to stay sober
10% It will increase violence or crime
28% Other

It should be sold wherever it can be, but I am in favour of stricter warning labels about the health effects.

The system works well already. Why the need for change?

If teenagers want booze, they'll get booze. We did!

The store could be accountable for giving alcohol to someone who is underage or already inebriated.

WE ASKED Metro readers

Make budgeting better: Run it like a salad bar

TORY'S TORONTO
Matt Elliott

Since I started obsessively following things, the City of Toronto's budget process has, most years, been a lot like going to a boring restaurant with a fixed menu.

City hall bureaucrats would present a balanced budget, complete with much of the new spending council had previously requested. Then, the mayor and councillors would go on to make a bunch of mostly minor tweaks before approving that year's selections.

If a politician supports something, now they must also support finding a way to pay for it.

They'd add some salt, smother some items in hot sauce, scrape off some superfluous parsley, overcook a bunch of items for no clear reason and call it a day.

This year, though, new city manager Peter Wallace has flipped the table. At the launch of the 2016 budget process last week, Wallace introduced something that's less like a prix-fixe menu and more like an elaborate salad bar.

The preliminary budget for next year includes virtually none of the $67 million in requests for new and enhanced program spending Mayor John Tory and city council approved over the last year.

Instead of getting a menu that's basically set, elected officials were told to pick which things will get implemented. That might mean bigger tax increases. It might mean new revenue tools.

It's a novel approach — one that could have both benefits and drawbacks.

On one hand, the salad bar approach to budgeting could give councillors an opportunity to put a favourable spin on the budget process. Look, they can say, the budget — before considering any of the new stuff we asked for — is almost balanced.

Much of the new spending could then be dismissed as unnecessary in an environment where government belt-tightening is the order of the day.

But that would be unfair. The $67 million isn't a bunch of nice-to-haves. It's a bunch of need-to-haves. It includes things like $6 million needed for council's anti-poverty strategy. It includes $13.7 million for implementing the recommendations of the mayor's task force on Toronto Community Housing. It includes $16.7 million in badly needed TTC enhancements, including the delivery of earlier Sunday service, something that was endorsed by Tory himself.

These items were announced for a reason. To back away would be dishonest. Money must be found. It's the finding money part that gives me some hope for this process.

The previous approach to budgeting seemed to give some councillors the impression they could vote for service enhancements with no budgetary impact.

With the right leadership, the salad-bar process could put an end to that, leaving less room for obfuscation.

If a politician supports something, now they must also support finding a way to pay for it. And if Toronto goes hungry, we'll know exactly who to blame.

Matt Elliott lives and writes in Toronto. Follow him on Twitter @GraphicMatt

metroview

The remedy for Christmas heartbreak is Christmas itself

Michael Coren
For Metro

In a handful of anticipation-soaked days, those of who are Christian will celebrate the birth of the Son of God. Whether it was in a stable and precisely when it happened is not the point. No, the first issue is that for those of who believe, the birth of Christ changed everything. The second is what should that mean for those who aren't Christian?

It breaks my heart that Christians are so often perceived — entirely understandably — not as followers of the Prince of Peace and He who personified love but as angry reactionaries obsessed with right-wing politics and obscure issues rather than with spreading joy.

Breaks my heart when I see Republican candidates, most of them insisting they are devout Christians, boasting how many bombs they will drop, how many people they will kill and dismissing child casualties as collateral damage.

Breaks my heart when I see Canadian Christians shouting hysterically about abortion, spreading falsehoods about vitally necessary sex education curricula and opposing gay equality. By the way, some of the finest Christians I have ever met have been gay, because they have felt the sting of persecution.

Whatever your religion or lack of it, the sense of goodwill is impossible to avoid.

They have shared in Christ's torment.

Breaks my heart when I hear extreme Christian leaders arguing that refugees should be blocked from entering North America, claiming that social justice and redistribution of wealth have nothing to do with the faith or demanding less gun control and more expenditure on the military.

If it breaks this pathetic heart, what does it do to He whose birth we are about to remember, and who demanded that we turn the other cheek, love our enemy and embrace our oppressor?

Jesus turned the world upside down. In defeat is victory, in poverty is wealth, in suffering is contentment and in humility is glory. His words were so transforming that they make the manifestos of the secular revolutionaries appear placid and passive.

For the non-Christian, Christmas is a time to reboot, relax, embrace family, perhaps consider what you believe — or don't believe — through the prism of this winter festival. Whatever your religion or lack of it, the sense of goodwill is impossible to avoid, and that's sparkling in its rarity. For me, however, I will bend the knee, pray thanks and ask forgiveness. My heart may be broken, but there is one who can fix it. For all of us. Merry Christmas.

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Real Housewives' star Teresa Giudice to be freed from prison before Christmas

The funny thing about disease is ...

PODCAST

Haligonians tackle stigma with humour

Jeremie Saunders has the kind of rock hard abs gym rats would kill for.

He doesn't work out.

"It's because I cough so much," said Saunders, who lives with cystic fibrosis. "There's all these perks to CF. It's the worst disease. It's so awful. It's such a bummer. But. ... I have a really killer six pack."

It's this ability to see the positive in a brutal illness that has made Saunders and his two buddies, Taylor MacGillivary and Brian Stever, the popular hosts of a boundary-pushing new podcast, called Sickboy. Episodes take on the sentiment of Saunders' own devil-may-care approach to sickness as the Halifax trio tackle everything from anorexia to cancer to PTSD. They post one episode a week featuring interviews with subjects who alternate between bursts of laughter and heartfelt confessions.

"We're just kind of exploring and looking for the humour in an otherwise dark situation," said Saunders, a 27-year-old actor and yoga teacher, in a phone interview. "What we are laughing at is the absurdity of illness."

And they don't sugarcoat it.

The first episode details one of Saunders most embarrassing experiences as a teen.

"I remember coming in to do this barium enema and I've got the most gorgeous doctor," he recalls. "I was like oh my God this is amazing… until she pulls out this giant tube with a balloon attached to it. And then she has to stick that thing up my butt."

Brian Stever, left, Jeremie Saunders and Taylor MacGillivary are the hosts of the Sickboy Podcast. Saunders has cystic fibrosis and put together a show that takes a lighthearted approach to talking about the disease. TIM KROCHAK/FOR TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

He goes on to detail the unfortunate experience of walking to the washroom with fluid leaking from his anus… all the while he and his co-hosts laugh uncontrollably.

Today, Saunders calls this humour his "therapy." But he hasn't always been so eager to open up. As a teen, he was ashamed of the disease that gave him uncontrollable coughing fits and forced him to take pills every time he ate. He felt weird and acted out by refusing to take his medication — a move that sometimes landed him in the hospital.

> **"We don't have the same comfort level with illness as we do with other social topics. People panic."**
> Andrew Henderson, Sickboy Podcast guest

Coupled with that was a number hanging over his head. Doctors told his parents he wouldn't live to see 25. Today, the median age for Canadians living with CF is around 50. The podcast has risen from small potato beginnings. They recorded the first podcast in a Halifax library on a whim back in June and launched a Kickstarter campaign that netted $13,000, helping them build a recording studio at Stever's home. Sickboy garnered 25,000 downloads in 90 days and was named one of iTunes best of 2015 Canadian podcasts.

One of their guests was Andrew Henderson, a 27-year-old who lives with lymphoblastic lymphoma.

"You rarely hear this young voice… talking about illness in a fun, positive way," said Henderson, who brought a bottle of champagne to the Toronto interview. "I just want a pamphlet that says, 'Live your f—ing life. Go to the club, party.'"

Henderson has the same blunt, humorous approach to disease as the Sickboy guys do.

When he stops joking about cancer, it wins, he said. But he also understands the podcast might be hard for otherwise healthy people to listen to.

"We don't have the same comfort level with illness as we do with other social topics. People panic," Henderson says, thinking of the times he shared his diagnosis with friends. "What I got a lot of the time was pity, which is really isolating."

That fear around conversations about illness is exactly what Saunders, MacGillivary and Stever hope to tear down. It's the reason why they don't sidestep personal questions, censor swearing or edit out the numerous male genitalia jokes.

"We want to eliminate the awkwardness and discomfort that sometimes comes with speaking about illness. It just adds to stigma and shame and embarrassment," Saunders says.

They respect that not everyone who's sick is going to be ready to joke — and they're adamant that they recognize the seriousness of disease — but they see more benefit in tackling tough issues with infectious laughter than they do in avoiding talking about sensitive subjects.

Indeed, healthcare experts say there are measurable benefits to adopting a positive attitude, both physiologically and psychologically. People who have positive emotions tend to have lower blood pressure, less stress and better sleep, experts say.

And if that attitude seems entirely out of reach for someone who's sick, "change it up," advises Saunders. Read a different book, listen to different music or watch a new TV show — it's better than the alternative, he said.

"You can choose to be taken down and dragged down because of your circumstances and that's a really easy route," Saunders said. "But there's something so much more liberating in trying to find the humour in that dark situation."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

ADVICE

Three tips for nailing any presentation

Raquel Laneri
Metro | New York

Sharing one's personal narrative isn't just a way to entertain a group of strangers and friends; it's also a vital skill. Whether you're pitching a business idea to would-be investors, a freelancer going to a networking party or a college senior writing a cover letter for their first job, being able to tell an engaging, personal story will help you stand out from the pack.

As co-founder of the education program for The Moth (a New York-based storytelling group), Micaela Blei knows how to get the best stories out of even the most reticent individuals. The former teacher and two-time GrandSLAM champion currently coaches New York City adolescents to open up about their lives in front of strangers, teachers, parents and, perhaps most terrifyingly, their peers. And, to great success, too.

If you tell the audience what you're feeling, they will be on your side and root for you.
Micaela Blei, The Moth

"We've seen our students take their Moth stories and do exciting things with them," she says. "A few have taken the transcript of their story and edited it into a college essay. And one student took audio of her story and made it into a film that she later submitted to the Tribeca Film Festival — and won."

We asked Blei for her tips on how to tell a great story.

Talk it out

When giving a presentation it's important to sound natural. You want to draw people in, communicate with them, and the best way to do that isn't by writing a speech and memorizing it.

"Sharing a story as yourself isn't performing a monologue," says Blei. Instead, try to tell your story into a tape recorder — or in front of a friend — and refine it from there. "Make a bullet point list of what's going to happen so you can stay on track, but don't write out the whole thing." (Blei recommends saying your story when writing personal essays too, to help give them that intimate feel.)

Be vulnerable

Listeners respond to those with whom they can empathize, so don't try to masque your insecurities or faults. Be honest in your story of course, but also if you're feeling nervous, or if you trip up, admit as much, or make a joke about it.

"It's okay to be scared: It's a scary thing you're doing," says Blei. "And if you tell the audience what you're feeling, they will be on your side and root for you."

End with a bang

You definitely want to start strong, of course, but you should leave your audience pumped up, inspired and on a strong note.

"You don't have to tie your story up with a perfect little bow," says Blei. "But, you don't want to peter out. Follow your bullet points so you don't lose sight of your conclusion."

When it comes to debt, income doesn't matter

PERSONAL FINANCE

Money issues arise when you spend more than you make

Gail Vaz-Oxlade
For Metro Canada

Having a great income doesn't guarantee that you'll have no money problems. You've heard me say this before: It doesn't matter how much you make; if you're spending more money than you bring in, you're headed for disaster.

Let's take the example of Alex and Sam who both have great jobs, two beautiful kids and a nice home. Yup, they have it all. But Alex and Sam suffer an ailment common to lots of hard-working, high-earning couples: It's the We-Make-Lotsa-Money-So-We-Don't-Have-To-Worry Syndrome!

It was the WMLMSWDHTW Syndrome that had Alex and Sam move out of a perfectly good home into a much bigger home than they needed or could afford. When they saw how much equity they'd built up, it seemed like a good idea to use that equity to leverage themselves into a bigger home. Bam — Sam's job disappeared, so a minute later they were moving again, downsizing to get their housing costs back in line. The result: They eroded most of their equity with all their sales costs and they ended up with less house than they started.

It was also the WMLMSWDHTW Syndrome that had Alex and Sam guestimating their expenses. After all, if you make more money than you can imagine spending, why do a budget at all? You can just wing it, right? Wrong! That's how Alex and Sam ended up spending four-and-a-half times what they thought they were spending on food.

Unless you learn to budget, you're fooling yourself if you think making more will make your debt disappear. ISTOCK

People often operate under the fallacy that bad things can't happen to good people. That's the only explanation for why they don't have emergency funds. So when Sam was out of work for almost six months, they were totally unprepared for the drop in their income and ended up using a line of credit to fill the gap. When Sam got back to work, paying down the huge line they'd racked up became the next stress in their relationship.

You aren't rich until you've converted that equity into cash.

People have an obsession with their equity as if it's worth anything at all. "Equity" is only a word. It only becomes "money" if you downsize from a home that's pretty much paid off to a home that's valued at a lot less. Otherwise, equity is just an opportunity for borrowing. Great for lenders; not so great for people who have to pay the interest on all that money they've borrowed. So get over feeling "rich" because you have equity. You aren't rich until you've converted that equity into cash.

And for heaven's sake, stop thinking of your home as a source of credit. Your focus should be on working hard to get rid of your mortgage, not finding new ways to make more debt. Today, if you haven't already done so, talk to your lender about switching to a weekly accelerated-pay mortgage. You'll end up making one extra monthly payment a year that goes directly to pay off your principal. On a $100,000 mortgage at seven per cent, that extra monthly payment will save you $24,000 in interest.

For more money advice, visit Gail's website at gailvazoxlade.com

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When retail therapy becomes addiction

SHOP TILL YOU DROP

Some brains hard-wired for the ka-ching, research shows

Lisa Monks would shop mostly when she felt lonely. "It filled that void," she says. Instead of sitting at home alone and miserable, she would hit the malls and chat up friendly sales clerks. "It was an escape from reality," she says. Finding that perfect outfit that made her feel pretty would make her euphoric. "I'd be excited and couldn't wait to wear it," the 49-year-old says. "I became addicted to the feeling."

But the bliss of buying didn't last for long. "There was buyer's remorse when I came home and looked at all the dresses in my closet. I'd feel guilty," Monks says.

Shopping addiction is a serious problem in North America, according to consumer psychologist Scott Rick at the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business. Some psychologists estimate the condition occurs in 6 per cent of the population — and it's probably on the rise, affecting slightly more women than men, he says.

"It's never been easier to shop," he says.

Online stores are always open. People shop on their mobile phones while on the GO Train. And those 1-800 numbers are always beckoning … not to mention the sales.

Luckily, scientists are beginning to decode the disorder. The brains of compulsive shoppers are wired differently than most people's, says neuroscientist Joseph Ciorciari, acting director of the Brain and Psychological Sciences Department of Swinburne University of Technology in Australia.

In a study published last year, Ciorciari and colleagues attached compulsive buyers and normal consumers to brain scanning (EEG) machines while they "shopped" for virtual items.

The study shows that compulsive shopping can't be dismissed as innocent "retail therapy." The brains of shopping addicts are wired for the hunt. "They always want to have this feel-good sentiment," says Ciorciari. And that constant craving is a hallmark of addiction.

MAXED OUT

Lisa Monks' life spiralled downhill with each new purchase. "The harder I try and nothing is working, the more I feel I deserve to have nice stuff," she says.

Lisa Monks is a shopaholic who has worked past her retail addiction. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

He found that the pleasure pathways in the brain lit up when they made purchases. The feel-good chemical dopamine, which is released in these reward circuits in response to good sex or a tasty meal, counteracts sadness and gives you the illusion of control when you're feeling lost.

The problem is that the excitement of buying doesn't last. Shoppers experience withdrawal symptoms just like any other addicts. Within minutes of spending, they regret their purchases. "This drives even more compulsive behaviour," says Samuel Waldner, an addictions counsellor in private practice in Toronto. Eventually this repetitive destructive pattern can lead to bankruptcy, broken relationships, and even suicide, he says.

Monks maxed out the "insanely high" limit on her credit card. She alienated her boyfriend, who disapproved of the buying. It wasn't until her father died and she had to help her aging mother pay off her mortgage that reality set in. Monks realized she needed help.

Therapists treating shopping addiction focus clients' awareness on the toll of purchases. Waldner helps clients stop spending by giving them lists of their behaviour's bad effects that they can pull out when temptation strikes.

He encourages clients to throw themselves into gratifying artistic pursuits — painting, writing or photography — as substitutes.

Monks realized she'd have to find creative alternatives to feel good. She began reading books, worked out until she was exhausted and spent more time hanging out with her friends. She wrote a book about relationships, and has recently landed a blog on the Huffington Post.

While she still occasionally splurges on a dress, these lapses are only momentary. "Shopping doesn't make me happy," she says. "It's a good feeling when you've done something positive and you're working towards a goal," says Monks.

Best of all, she's out of debt and has faith in the future. "For the first time I feel like I have hope," she says.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Don't expect too much too soon in terms of everyone spending holiday time together, a family mediator says. ISTOCK

Post-split, the best gift for kids is a peaceful holiday

FAMILY TIME

Co-parenting to minimize stress, max out love for kids

This is the first holiday season since Danielle Bileski-Leonard and her husband separated. But she and her ex — who have taken a co-operative approach during a difficult period — aren't squabbling over the big day.

"We want to keep our Christmas morning tradition intact even though our children now float between two households. This means that my ex-husband will join me and our three boys early Christmas morning to open gifts and enjoy one another's company," says Bileski-Leonard.

But even though the two are co-parenting well together, it's still a big emotional adjustment.

"There are moments I feel sadness when I consider that this holiday season just won't have the same warmth and joy as past Christmases now that our family is no longer intact," she says. "That's when I have to remind myself that our kids still experience the same love they did before my husband and I separated. It is out of this love that we can build new traditions, shed the past and embrace a bright new future."

Psychotherapist Kelly Flannigan-Bos says because the holidays are steeped in expectation even at the best of times, managing those is particularly tricky if a marriage has just ended.

"If you're used to being together as a family unit on those days, the thought of not being with your child on Christmas Eve or on Hanukkah can be really devastating or stressful," she say. "You may not want to give it up at all. But probably the other parent doesn't either."

If the relationship with your ex is quite tense or acrimonious, you're going to have to decide what you can let go of for the sake of the kids. "What actually needs to be fought over and what is getting your anger out over another issue?"

Flannigan-Bos says it may be more enjoyable to celebrate on the 20th with no stress than in a tense, time-pressed way on the 25th.

Family mediator Rosanna Breitman says it's important to be sensitive to the fact that the first post-separation holiday can be much more difficult for some family members than others. "Don't expect too much too soon in terms of everyone spending holiday time together," Breitman says.

"If the kids will be dividing their time between their parents' homes, it's essential to manage expectations and logistics in advance," she says. This includes deciding who will have the kids on which days, when transitions occur and whose responsibility the transitions will be.

"Make sure the kids are aware of the plans in advance so that they aren't feeling anxious about where they will be at any given time," Breitman adds.

"Remember that the greatest gift you can give your kids is that of a peaceful and worry-free holiday. Be respectful towards one another, don't start fights in front of the children and don't put the other parent down or use the kids as go-betweens," says Breitman. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

ME TIME

Breitman recommends that parents plan enjoyable activities for the times when they're not going to be with the kids. "Give yourself permission to have fun and enjoy some adult time without guilt, sadness or jealousy of the fun the kids are having without you."

Flannigan-Bos adds that it's important to have someone to talk to leading up to and during the season, such as a supportive friend or a therapist. "Then it's just a matter of taking it moment by moment, breathing, letting go and thinking before you speak."

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JOHANNA SCHNELLER WHAT I'M WATCHING

Jonesing for Jessica's soul

THE SHOW: Jessica Jones (Netflix) Season 1 Episode 2
THE MOMENT: The Smile

Krysten Ritter as the eponymous Jessica Jones and Mike Colter as Luke Cage. CONTRIBUTED

Secret superhero-turned-private eye Jessica Jones (Krysten Ritter) has a confession to make. She's been sleeping with her handsome neighbourhood bartender, Luke Cage (Mike Colter). But tonight she has to tell him the truth: She's also been tailing him for a client. They face one another in his dimly lit bar.

"So the night you came to my place, that was part of this job?" he asks, angry and hurt.

"I shouldn't have done that," she replies, looking at him steadily.

"Because it's messed up? Or because you got caught?" he asks.

"Both," she answers.

"Get out of here," he growls. "Stay the hell away from me."

She wants to say more. But she turns on her heel and goes.

Ritter's delivery of that single syllable, "Both," is an example of what makes her, and this show, so terrific. She says it with a small smile. It's just a flash, but it communicates volumes: She's embarrassed and sheepish. She's trying to appear tough. She likes him, and she likes him for asking the question. But if you blink, you miss it all.

Part of the joy of watching a hard-boiled character is catching the tiny moments when she cracks and let you in, and Ritter is a genius at that.

Jessica's superpowers don't make her invulnerable; they simply mean we don't have to worry about her body as she prowls the back alleys of New York's gritty Hell's Kitchen. But we worry about her soul, because Ritter makes us want to.

Johanna Schneller is a media connoisseur who zeroes in on pop-culture moments. She appears Monday through Thursday.

RECORD BREAKERS

Latest Star Wars a Force at box office

To say that the force is strong with this one isn't nearly enough.

Studio estimates on Sunday say Star Wars: The Force Awakens brought in a galactic $238 million over the weekend, making it the biggest North American debut of all time.

The Walt Disney Co. earnings destroy the previous opening record set by Jurassic World, which drew $208.8 million this summer.

$120.5 M

Estimated amount the Walt Disney Co. said Star Wars: The Force Awakens made from Thursday night previews and opening day Friday.

A few other movies tried to compete against J.J. Abrams' seventh chapter in George Lucas' space saga.

Almost a galaxy away, the animated Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Road Chip came in second with $14.4 million

In third place, Tina Fey and Amy Poehler's comedy Sisters earned an estimated $13.42 million. A whopping 79 per cent of audiences were female for the R-rated comedy. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Force Awakens sets an opening day record. CONTRIBUTED

BOSSY

Tina Fey is a former mean girl

Ned Ehrbar
Metro | Hollywood

Watching Mean Girls you might think Tina Fey became an expert in mean girl behaviour by being on the receiving end of it. But you would be wrong. It turns out that Fey herself was a mean girl. Can you believe it?

"I admit it openly," she tells the Edit.

"That was a disease that had to be conquered. It's a bad coping mechanism, but when you feel less than — in high school, everyone feels less than everyone else for different reasons — in your mind it's a way of levelling the playing field. Though of course it's not."

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metro SPORTS

Sidney Crosby is dealing with a lower-body injury and could miss Pittsburgh's game Monday night against Columbus

NBA IN BRIEF

Irving makes season debut as Cavs rout 76ers

Kyrie Irving scored 12 points and played 18 minutes in his season debut and LeBron James had 23, leading the Cleveland Cavaliers to a 108-86 victory Sunday over the Philadelphia 76ers, who lost their 10th straight and fell to 1-28.

Irving was on the floor for the first time since breaking his left kneecap in Game 1 of the NBA Finals against Golden State. The Cavs managed without him, going 17-7 to start the season.

The Cavs improved to 12-1 at home and are eyeing a Christmas Day game against the Warriors. James didn't play in the fourth quarter, logging a season-low 26 minutes.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bosh's 29 points lead Heat past Trail Blazers

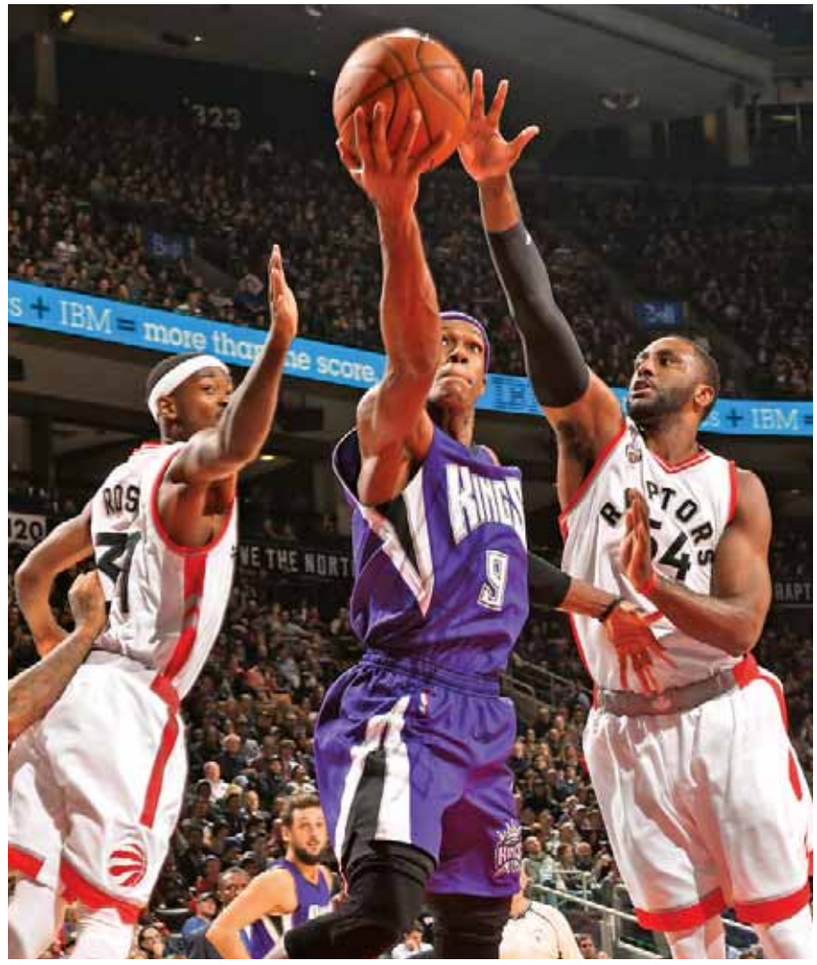
Chris Bosh scored 29 points, Hassan Whiteside shook off a slow first half to finish with 22 points and 11 rebounds, and the Miami Heat beat the Portland Trail Blazers 116-109 on Sunday.

Dwyane Wade scored 18 points and added seven assists for the Heat, who trailed by 12 at one point and were down 10 at the half.

Damian Lillard scored 32 points and had nine assists for Portland, which dropped its third straight. CJ McCollum added 20 points for the Trail Blazers.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Raps lose clash with Kings



Kings point guard Rajon Rondo drives to the hoop against Raptors Terrence Ross, left, and Patrick Patterson on Sunday at Air Canada Centre. RON TURENNE/NBAE VIA GETTY IMAGES

NBA

Toronto's comeback bid falls short with Lowry ejected

SUNDAY At ACC

KINGS	RAPTORS
104	94

A horrible first quarter and the loss of Kyle Lowry proved costly for the Toronto Raptors on Sunday.

DeMar DeRozan scored 28 points, but it wasn't enough to lift the Raptors — missing Lowry for most of the second half after he was ejected — over the Sacramento Kings in a 104-94 loss.

Patrick Patterson added 18, while James Johnson finished with 14, Terrence Ross chipped in with 13 and Bismack Biyombo grabbed 13 rebounds.

Rajon Rondo and former Raptor Rudy Gay led the Kings (11-16) with 19 points apiece.

The Raptors (17-12) stumbled out to another weak start, digging themselves a 22-point hole before the first quarter was even over. The 37 points they gave up to the Kings marked the most in a first quarter for Toronto this season.

Lowry was ejected with 7:22 left in the third quarter, when he was relentless in arguing about a call and picked up two quick technicals.

Still the Raptors managed to inch their way back into the game, and trailed just 78-70 with a quarter to play. A Patterson three-pointer with 4:29 remaining pulled the Raptors to within four points, but that was as close as they'd come.

Darren Collison's basket with 1:10 left put the Kings up by 12 and sent the fans pouring out of the Air Canada Centre.

The Raptors were without both Jonas Valanciunas, who missed his 14th consecutive game with a broken hand, and DeMarre Carroll (knee contusion). Both are scheduled to see doctors this week seeking clearance for their return.

NEXT GAME
The Raptors host the Dallas Mavericks on Tuesday.

Rondo was playing his second game since the Kings point guard was suspended for his flurry of profanity-laced homophobic slurs directed toward referee Bill Kennedy.

Kings coach George Karl said he believes the team has moved past the ugly incident.

"I hope so," Karl said. "I don't think it's a burning fire, it probably has a way to flicker and maybe stimulate something but I don't think it's on our top-10 priority list, it's not going to make the top 10 of David Letterman for us."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

WORLD JUNIORS

Canada cuts four to finalize roster

Montreal Canadiens draft pick Noah Juulsen was among four cuts made by Hockey Canada on Sunday as it finalized its world junior roster in Finland.

Jeremy Lauzon of the QMJHL's Rouyn-Noranda Huskies was the other defenceman cut by Canada.

Jayce Hawryluk of the WHL's Brandon Wheat Kings and Nick Merkley of the Kelowna Rockets were also released by the team.

"We had a really good evaluation period in Toronto and Imatra, and were able to see how the players responded to different situations — from practices to games," said Scott Salmond, VP of hockey operations and national teams for Hockey Canada.

"These are never easy decisions, but we feel confident in the team we have and their ability to make the nation proud."

VS. CZECH REP.

Mackenzie Blackwood recorded the shutout as Canada blanked the Czech Republic 1-0 on Sunday in an exhibition play.

The Canadian roster features three goaltenders, including Calgary Flames draft pick Mason McDonald, MacKenzie Blackwood of the OHL's Barrie Colts and Samuel Montembeault.

Defenceman Joe Hicketts is among those to make the team. He's one of four returnees from last year's team that won gold at the tournament held in Toronto and Montreal. Toronto Maple Leafs prospect Mitch Marner is one of 13 forwards to make the team. Jake Virtanen, who was loaned to Canada from the Vancouver Canucks on Dec. 13, also made the team and is another returnee from last year.

"These are never easy decisions, but we feel confident in the team we have.
Scott Salmond, VP of hockey operations and national teams for Hockey Canada

The Canadians open on Boxing Day against the United States.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Noah Juulsen, drafted by the Canadiens in June, was sent home from Finland on Sunday. GETTY IMAGES FILE

IN BRIEF

Canadian women's lead evaporates in Brazil

Janine Beckie scored the first goal but host Brazil responded with three of its own, including two from Monica, for a 3-1 victory over Canada on Sunday in the final of the international women's soccer tournament in Natal.

Monica's first goal of the game, on a header off a corner kick in the 63rd minute, stood as the winner as Brazil remained undefeated in the four-team tournament.

Canada's only other loss was against Brazil in the final game of the preliminaries. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Liverpool falls in Watford

Jurgen Klopp was left wondering how he can get Liverpool winning consistently after his side were emphatically beaten 3-0 by Watford in the Premier League on Sunday.

Two goals in the first 15 minutes from Nathan Ake and Odion Ighalo swiftly established a deserved advantage for Watford, and Ighalo sealed victory with his second strike five minutes from the end. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jurgen Klopp GETTY IMAGES

Close call casts a shadow

NFL

Carolina goes 14-0 as early lead holds vs. New York rally

After one of the strangest and nastiest games this NFL season, Cam Newton had an odd feeling.

His Carolina Panthers had just shrugged off a record-tying Giants comeback to remain perfect with a wild 38-35 victory Sunday. Newton, who threw for five touchdowns to further state his case as NFL MVP wasn't quite sure what he'd just been through.

"It was kind of a weird feeling in that locker room, and I'm still feeling kind of weird, but not enough to (not) celebrate," said Newton, who also rushed for 100 yards. "We're just trying to find a way to get victories."

New York tied the score after trailing by 28 points in the third quarter, but the Panthers got to 14-0 on Graham Gano's 43-yard field goal as time expired.

It was Carolina's 18th straight regular-season win. Newton has thrown for 19 touchdowns in the last five games and a career-best 33 in this so-far special season.

It looked oh so easy when Carolina led 35-7 with 5:32 left in the third quarter. Then the Giants (6-8) matched San Francisco's 28-point rally — from the same score — against New Orleans in 1980.

One big difference: The 49ers won that game in overtime. The Giants trail Washington by one game in the NFC East, and have lost in the final minutes six times.

Carolina quarterback Cam Newton runs the ball against the Giants on Sunday in East Rutherford, N.J. AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Carolina visits Atlanta and hosts Tampa Bay to finish the schedule. All three previous NFL teams to reach 14-0 — Miami in 1972, New England in 2007 and Indianapolis in 2009 — made the Super Bowl. Only the Dolphins won the championship, though.

"These last two games are division opponents, and we'll be in a hostile environment in Atlanta," Newton added. "And we've got a tricky week with Christmas. We just have to find a way to keep moving ahead and make sure we stay on the right side of the pendulum."

The Giants tied it when Odell Beckham Jr., involved in a game-long helmet-smacking, shoving and jawing session with cornerback Josh Norman, got behind Norman for a 14-yard touchdown catch with 1:46 to go. Beckham had lost his cool several times as Norman was getting the best of him in their high-profile matchup. But he got free for a 40-yard catch and run that led to the tying TD.

Then Newton calmly guided the Panthers 49 yards to the winning kick.

"To go out there and just let them drive down the field is just mind-boggling," said cornerback Dominique Rodgers-Cromartie, who blocked a field goal in the fourth quarter. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

He's got the maturity of a little kid.

Carolina safety Josh Norman on Giants receiver Odell Beckham Jr., pictured. Beckham had multiple run-ins with the Panthers Sunday, including a vicious helmet-to-helmet hit on star cornerback Norman.

SUNDAY At New York

PANTHERS	GIANTS
38	35

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RECIPE Chickpea and Spinach Stew

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

Celebrate Meatless Monday with this Spanish-style stew. It will taste even better as leftovers for tomorrow's lunch.

Ready in
Prep time: 30 minutes
Serves 6

Ingredients
- 2 onions, chopped
- 2 to 3 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 3-inch piece of ginger, grated or minced
- 4 cloves of garlic, minced
- 2 or 3 big handfuls of baby spinach, washed and stems trimmed
- 2 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1/2 tsp ground coriander
- 1/2 tsp cayenne (optional)
- 1 x 28 oz can tomatoes
- 1 x 28 oz can of chickpeas
- 1 cup water
- Pinch of salt

Directions
1. Sauté onions and pinch of salt in oil until they are quite soft, about 10 minutes. Add ginger and garlic and stir for about a minute or two. Add spices and cook for another minute.
2. Add chickpeas and tomatoes. Use the back of a spoon to break up the tomatoes. Add the water and bring to a boil. Add the spinach, reduce heat and simmer for about 15 minutes.
3. Serve over rice and put a dollop of plain yogurt on top.

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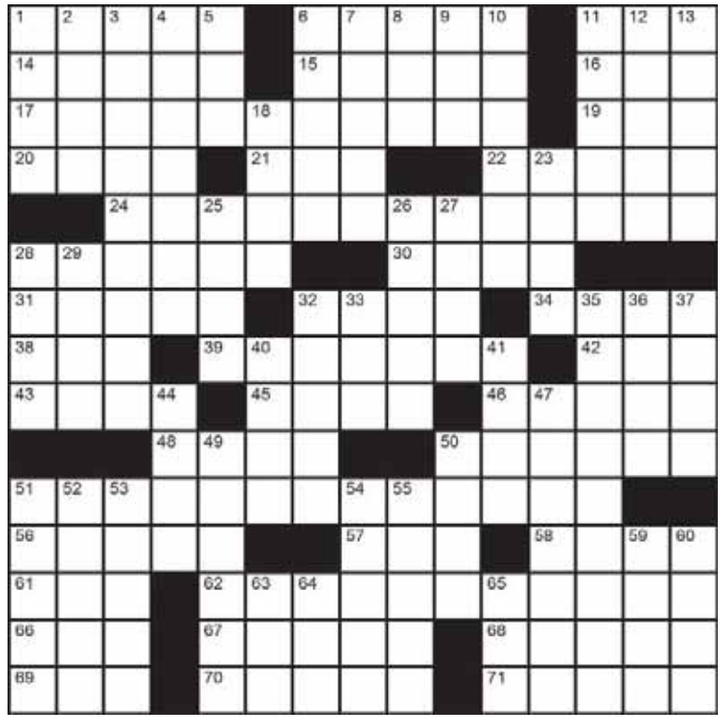
CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. Robert Redford's "The Natural" (1984) role, Roy __
6. Ms. Abdul
11. Letter-writer's li'l afterthoughts
14. Veggie burger slice
15. "The table __ __!" (Suppertime exclamation)
16. Li'l round rate
17. Ebenezer Scrooge employee: 2 wds.
19. Three vowels
20. Heraldic border
21. Phantom's scare!
22. Edmonton office building, __ Tower
24. Book lover's Christmas decoration: 4 wds.
28. Ms. Tisdale
30. Calgary's prov.
31. Gladiator's 153
32. Lemony
34. Recipe amt.
38. Mr. Bachman
39. Most close by
42. Him, in Hull
43. Arctic birds, Snowy __
45. Very, in Verdun
46. Chicago's airport
48. River of Spain
50. Food store merchant
51. Wildlife in Canada... SARA = __ __ __ Act
56. Christmas song
57. __ Lanka
58. SNL and NASA , e.g.
61. Large truck
62. French log-shaped Christmas dessert: 3 mots
66. Bitty British band
67. Ice Cube, aka __ Jackson
68. When it will be five months from December: 2 wds.
69. East: French
70. Festive fellow, __ Nick
71. __-toothed tiger

DOWN
1. Freight train rider
2. __ about (Circa): 2 wds.
3. Nova Scotia village with a religious sounding name: 2 wds.
4. Celine Dion's "The Prayer" duettist Andrea
5. Grad-to-be, briefly
6. Mountaineer's spike
7. Tie type
8. Show-to-seats, shortly
9. Hawaii garland
10. Certify
11. Cost
12. Sewing kit item
13. Cartoon creature of blue
18. "About _ __" (2002) starring Hugh Grant
23. Fantastic, in slang
25. Sinn __ (Irish republican party)
26. Arctic __ (Northern-hopping critters)
27. Singer/pianist Mr. John's, for short
28. X-__ knife
29. Cabbage dish
32. Tropical tubers
33. "We Three Kings of Orient __"
35. British Columbia ski resort, Whistler __
36. Certain
37. __ 1 Imports
40. Raison d'__
41. Ms. Kelly of song
44. Like dry Spanish wine
47. "Gloria, __ in excelsis!": Latin bit of Christmas song "Ding Dong Merrily on High"
49. The Hobbit character Mr. Baggins, and namesakes
50. Solvers jot down answers to clues in the Crossword's what?
51. Loose rock at a cliff's base
52. Buckets
53. Grain fungus
54. Greyish
55. Special snack
59. Bring up
60. Leonard __, Roy Rogers' birth name
63. Canada's neighbour, commonly
64. Vital life energy
65. '_' __ for Eggnog

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS by Sally Brompton

Aries March 21 - April 20
It's a good time of year for you but it could be great if you stop worrying about what might go wrong and give yourself over to having a fun. Remember that definitions of a good time vary from person to person.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
If someone avoids giving you a straight answer to a perfectly straightforward question, then be on your guard. Take whatever moves are necessary to protect yourself.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
Be open about your feelings. Let those who care about you know you care about them too. You can make it hard for loved ones to know what is going on in your heart or your head.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
Don't overlook details that may seem minor now but could be of major significance later on. Even the smallest of causes can result in major consequences.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
Forget about any setbacks you may have suffered and start looking forward to a time when everything will go right for you again — it won't be long in coming.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
If you get the chance to prove your critics wrong this week then take it but don't let it consume your every waking thought. Life is much too short to waste time arguing with negative people.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Go where you want to go and do want you want to do this week. No one is going to stop you. You've just got to be free.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Your view of reality seems to be a bit distorted and that could cause problems if you let the line between fact and fantasy get blurred. Be extra careful where money matters are concerned.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
You have come through a lot in recent weeks but now you can look back and see there were reasons for everything that happened. Put doubts and fears behind you and act as if all things are possible.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
You want to be left alone with your thoughts. Make sure those you live and work with know you need space. If they are not prepared to give it to you then get up and go elsewhere.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
If you are at a loss as to what to do with yourself, get together with some friends and get involved in an activity that means something to you all. Now is the time for group activities of all kinds but especially those which help other people.

Pisces Feb. 20 - March 20
Give your status and reputation some thought now. With a little bit of effort, you can move up in the world rapidly.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

3								8
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6		4				3		1
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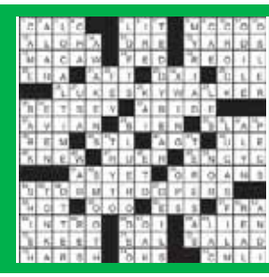

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5	3	7	4	6	8	9	2	1
4	1	6	2	5	9	3	7	8
2	9	8	1	3	7	6	4	5
9	2	3	7	1	4	8	5	6
7	8	4	5	9	6	2	1	3
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Stone Road Mall

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Heartland Power Centre
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